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POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION—DISCUSSION

JAMES BONAR: No one has covered the ground so well as Professor Field. Many of us will be glad that it is done not by ourselves but by somebody else; but we are glad to have it done.

Some popular objection seems invalid. The plan tends not to reduce population so much as to lessen infant mortality, though the result (shown by the census, etc.) has also been to lessen the increase. The Darwinian objection from the lessening of the field of selection is partly met by the lessening of infant mortality.

The movement has interest in economic history from its association with the Philosophical Radicals, identified with Ricardian economics.

It is a heresy springing from Malthus, as Marxian economics sprang from Ricardo. The latter, however, began as theory, the former is a practical expedient. It is hard to see its contribution to theory, whereas the Marxian heresy has been of distinct service in that regard.

This is not the place to discuss it ethically. What it proposes is a choice of evils; and it affects only the element of quantity or number. To most of us, quality is more important. Quality, and not simple quantity, is regarded in Professor Carver's proposals.

J. K. TOWLES: Professor Carver points out that continuous immigration will tend to increase the incomes of employers and decrease the wages of labor, particularly the wages of the lower grades of labor. Among the several main causes making for the growth of large fortunes in the United States, not the least important has been the steady supply of sturdy immigrants with low standards of life. Immigration from southern and eastern Europe is today playing somewhat the same part that bonded servants and slaves played during earlier periods. Developments in colonial America would have been much less rapid had there been no indented servants; Virginia would not have been ready for the Revolution had it not been for slavery. So, immigration has brought an extraordinary development of our natural resources, and has been one great factor making for the rapid accumulation of individual and of corporate fortunes.

Officials of the Chicago Federation of Labor have told me that the old system of obtaining immigrants under contract still exists so far as results are concerned, though, nominally, the contract labor law is observed. These officials contend that labor agents, representing certain large corporations, directly or indirectly finance the emigration from certain sections, and that these immigrants upon landing at Ellis Island know their destination or know that this will be arranged for them. This charge is given more than a semblance of truth when we read in the report of the National Immigration Commission recently submitted to Congress: "It is clear that there is a large induced immigration due to labor agents in this country, who, independently or in coöperation with agents in Europe, operate practically without restriction." (p. 21)

It is not probable that a systematic scheme of restriction will be inaugurated in the near future. Aside from the difficulty of determining upon what basis, what principle, the restriction is to be made the enactment of such legislation would be difficult. (1) The men who direct industrial affairs, and hence have a large part in directing political affairs, clearly recognize the relation existing in certain industries between low-waged immigrants and high dividend payments. (2) The skilled workers are not directly affected and therefore are not actively interested. I venture to say, in passing, that the skilled workers are more affected than they realize. (3) The unskilled laborers lack initiative and organization to press their interests. (4) Racial differences, except in the case of Orientals, are not such as actively to concern the general public.

A prevalent statement is to the effect that immigration of low-wage immigrants forces up the native workers to a higher economic level. The competition of immigrants does often cause a change of occupation on the part of native workers, but a new position does not necessarily mean a better one. A large number of mill workers have been forced out of the factories and have gone into store and office work and other employments. In many instances their wage in their new occupation is lower than it would have been had they remained in the factories and been able to support their wage demands by collective bargaining.

As Professor Smith has well said, it is surely high time for our employers to realize the humor of the situation when they beg for a high tariff to protect the American workmen from the pauper

labor of Europe and then hasten to bring over this labor to compete directly with the native workers.

Again, unrestricted immigration may prevent industrial conditions in south European countries from rising above the emigrating point. It might be well for the foreign workers that this country cease to be a safety valve for the social unrest of Europe. Then, perhaps, conditions in south Europe after getting worse might become very much better.

Professor Carver argues that if immigrants go in large numbers into agriculture it will probably result in the development of a class of landed proprietors and of a landless agricultural proletariat. A large number of immigrants have not in the past entered agriculture. Nor has there been any marked tendency toward concentration in farm ownership. The number of farms has increased faster than the population, and but a small proportion of farm owners own more than one farm. But because this was true for the years 1880 to 1900, the condition will not necessarily hold true for the future; land values are changing and the tenure of land may be expected to change accordingly.

As regards our attitude on the immigration question, I venture the suggestion that in our deciding moments our action will be determined not so much by economic considerations as by our answer to the question: Do we want to develop an American race? I know there are technical objections to the term "race", used in this sense. As Professor Emery says, though in another connection, our action will depend upon "how we feel about it." Is the development and maintenance of an American people, an American race, a matter of vital concern to us? Many sane and sage men think it is high time we were concerning ourselves with the breed of our people.

H. A. MILLIS: What I have to say is explained by Dr. Neill's absence and by the fact that I have recently been employed by the Immigration Commission as agent in charge of its investigations conducted in the West. Dr. Neill was a member of the Immigration Commission which has recently completed its work and submitted its results to Congress. I had hoped he would be present to say something concerning the broad scope of the investigations and the conclusions arrived at. In his absence I may say that the Commission has investigated most of the phases of our immigration problem, that the facts uncovered

are significant, and that the many reports submitted to Congress will comprise some forty volumes. As yet little has been published save a brief statement of conclusions and recommendations.

From the point of view of present legislative needs, we have in a general way three immigration problems. The first of these is connected with the immigration of large numbers of European laborers, chiefly to eastern industrial centers. The problem there is to maintain the basis for a high standard of living and for a progressive social life. The second is connected with the immigration of eastern Asiatics to the Pacific Coast and neighboring states. The problem there is to maintain labor conditions unimpaired, avoid the conflict between races due to the fact that this immigration involves a race problem, and to keep the field clear for an influx of natives and European whites to settle the country and to develop it along lines normal for the United States. The third problem is connected with the situation in the Hawaiian Islands where the great mass of the laborers and a large percentage of the small farmers and shop keepers are Asiatics. The problem there is to induce a large immigration of Europeans and of native Americans in order to undo what has been done and to "Americanize" the Islands.

Within the last twenty-five years our immigration from Europe has increased enormously and changed radically in character and motive, while the capacity of this country to absorb immigrants has in some respects diminished. Previous to 1883 most of our immigrants came from northern Europe; now more than 70 per cent of the immigrants from that quarter come from the states to the south and east. Italy, and chiefly the southern provinces, Austria-Hungary, and Russia each send us more immigrants than the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Switzerland combined. With this change in races has come a change in the object of their immigration. Formerly the great majority came as settlers; at present the great majority come as migratory laborers, and, though the larger number later decide to remain here, more than 40 per cent return to their native land, 30 per cent to remain there permanently. Except for a part of the immigration from Russia and Turkey, this movement from Europe is not forced by oppression. With comparatively few exceptions these immigrants come to earn higher wages, or are induced by agents of

various kinds; they are not fleeing from intolerable conditions at home.

The newer European immigration is of such character that it finds employment chiefly in unskilled labor in industrial centers. There, by force of numbers, superior competitive ability due to a low standard of living, organization into "gangs" and capacity for migration, and their rather disastrous effect upon trade unions, they have prevented a desirable improvement in the conditions of the lower ranks of labor. The unskilled labor market has become thoroughly saturated. Of course, there have been accompanying evils, such as colony life, slow assimilation, etc. Because of this situation, the following occupies a central position in the findings and recommendations of the Immigration Commission:

"The investigations of the Commission show an oversupply of unskilled labor in basic industries to an extent which indicates an oversupply of unskilled labor in the industries of the country as a whole, and therefore demands legislation which will at the present time restrict the further admission of such unskilled labor.

It is desirable in making the restriction that—

(a) A sufficient number be debarred to produce a marked effect upon the present supply of unskilled labor.

(b) As far as possible, the aliens excluded should be those who come to this country with no intention to become American citizens or even to maintain a permanent residence here, but merely to save enough, by the adoption, if necessary, of low standards of living, to return permanently to their home country. Such persons are usually men unaccompanied by wives or children.

(c) As far as possible the aliens excluded should also be those who, by reason of their personal qualities or habits, would least readily be assimilated or would make the least desirable citizens."

Of course the Commission recognizes that the expansion of industry has been much more rapid than it would otherwise have been, because of this rapid influx of laborers, and that as a result of this expansion many native workmen have been able to rise to higher positions than they could have commanded in the absence of such an expansion. The Commission maintains, however, that "the development of business may be brought about by means which lower the standard of living of the wage earners. A slow expansion of industry which would permit the adaptation and assimilation of the incoming labor supply is preferable to a very rapid industrial expansion which results in the immigration of laborers of low stand-

ards and efficiency, who imperil the American standard of wages and conditions of employment."

In these recommendations the Immigration Commission shifts the emphasis and takes somewhat new ground with regard to a large immigration of European laborers. With regard to any further restriction of immigration than is now in effect, however, it goes no farther than to enumerate various methods which have been suggested with that object in view, and to state that a majority of its members "favor the reading and writing test as the most feasible single method of restricting undesirable immigration." It may be predicted that within the next twenty-five years our general immigration legislation will not be such as to reduce the influx of unskilled laborers to small proportions.

With regard to the immigration of eastern Asiatic laborers on the other hand, the Commission has taken the ground that because of numerous facts well known to all, and still others brought to light by the investigation recently carried on, and which are set forth in detail in the reports submitted to Congress, it is undesirable, and makes these specific recommendations:

"The general policy adopted by Congress in 1882 of excluding Chinese laborers should be continued.

The question of Japanese and Korean immigration should be permitted to stand without further legislation so long as the present method of restriction proves to be effective.

An understanding should be reached with the British government whereby East Indian laborers would be effectively prevented from coming to the United States."

Except for that which concerns the East Indians, no change of our present policy is required in order to carry out these recommendations made by the Commission. The Chinese have been more or less effectively excluded since 1882, and there can be no doubt that their numbers in the western states have materially diminished within the last ten years. So also has the number of Japanese and Koreans in the western states diminished slightly during the last two years until they now number between 90,000 and 95,000. In 1907 Japan agreed in the future to refuse passports to her subjects who were laborers, except such as were returning to the United States to resume a former residence, such as were dependents of persons already domiciled in the United States, or such as were already possessed of an interest in land to

be used for agricultural purposes. This rule has more recently been applied to the Hawaiian Islands, while emigration from Japan to Canada and Mexico has been narrowly limited. This action of the Japanese government, together with the order issued by the President forbidding the indirect immigration of Japanese and Koreans, chiefly from the Hawaiian Islands, has given the western states the best possible protection against the further immigration of the laborers of those races. There can be no doubt that the Japanese government has acted in good faith, and that the restriction is effective. The only question is as to how long Japan can enforce her present rules when under her constitution all subjects are presumed to enjoy the same rights—a point being made much of by powerful interests in that country.

The Commission makes its recommendation concerning the East Indians because the laborers of that race are considered as undesirable from every point of view. It is desired that our government should request Great Britain to do for us what she has done for Canada in this matter. The direct immigration of Hindus to this country—which fortunately has not yet reached large proportions—began when they were effectively excluded from British Columbia.

The situation is now such that restriction of the immigration of Asiatic laborers to the point of exclusion must be regarded as the proper public policy. Any change from the policy recommended by the Commission would merely aggravate the situation. It may be that later, as suggested by Professor Smith, the immigration of all races will have to be controlled by the same general law. That, however, is a matter of the future and not of controlling importance in determining the proper policy for our government to pursue at the present time.

ISAAC A. HOURWICH: The argument in favor of restricting immigration proceeds from the tacit assumption that immigration outruns the opportunities for employment. This assumption is merely a modern version of the old Malthusian theory and is absolutely unsupported by facts.

Let us have a glance at the growth of production in the United States.

The production of coal in the United States trebled from 1890 to 1907. Such rapid growth cannot be accounted for by household consumption. Coal is the foundation of modern industry.

The increased consumption of coal indicates a corresponding increase in the consumption of steam; in other words, it indicates that the whole American industry has grown in proportion. Statistics of the production of iron and steel, copper, lead, and other basic products likewise bear witness to an industrial expansion far in excess of the growth of population in the United States. All of which goes to show that immigration increased in response to an increased demand for labor.

The argument that the immigrant laborer who is accustomed to a lower standard of living at home is satisfied with lower wages in the United States is likewise unsupported by facts. The Polish peasant may have lived in a straw thatched cabin at home, but in Chicago he can find no such cabin for rent, because it does not pay the owner of a city lot to maintain such a rookery. If you compare the rent paid by a Jewish workman for a small flat on the lower East Side of New York with the rent paid by a native workman in a small New England town for a detached cottage, you will discover that the Jewish workman must spend more for rent. So when the article produced by Jewish labor in New York must meet in the American market the competition of the article produced by native American labor in a small New England town, it is an open question whether Jewish labor is underbidding native American labor, or on the contrary the native-born American workman is underbidding the immigrant. The American laborer is better housed, to be sure, but it is the rent paid, not the comfort enjoyed, that affects the rate of wages through competition. Let us next take clothing. At home the Lithuanian peasant may have walked barefooted, but when he comes to work in the mines of Pennsylvania he must wear shoes, for which he must pay an American price. The prices which the alien workman pays in an American department store for his clothes are fixed, not by the immigrant himself, who is accustomed to a lower standard of living, but by the American manufacturer, by the American railway manager, by the American landlord, every one of them a true American, eager to make an American profit, in order to maintain an American standard of living. The immigrant cannot continue in America to lead the "simple life" to which he was accustomed at home. Willy-nilly he must from the date of his arrival adapt himself to the American standard of living, because the European standard of living is here simply impracticable. He must pay American prices for everything he consumes and he

is accordingly forced to demand American wages. His wages are not determined by his individual psychology, but by the economic structure of American social life.

It is remarkable that the clamor for restriction of immigration is loudest in California, where the average density of population is only fifteen persons per square mile. California is very largely an agricultural state. Let us take the state of Iowa as a standard for comparison. The population of Iowa has ceased to grow only after reaching an average density of forty per square mile. If we assume, for the sake of the argument, the latter density to be the maximum limit for an agricultural population with the present methods of agriculture (which would certainly be an arbitrary assumption), California could add four millions to her present population before she would reach the density of Iowa. The state of Washington has about the same density as California, while in Oregon the density is one-half less. What justification is there for this outcry against immigration, unless we are eager to emulate Australia, which has barely managed to raise a population of six millions on a continent of about the size of Europe?

CARL KELSEY: I rise merely to put myself on record as believing that the case against the recent immigrants and those likely to come in the near future is not yet closed. It seems to me a paradox to say in the words of a late senator, that "our ancestors fell first on their own knees, and then on the aborigines," and prevailed because they were superior; and then to claim that the so-called inferior peoples will now overcome us. Professor Carver has expressed a fear lest immigration should lead to high priced land and low priced labor. It is worth while to notice that at the present time, wherever prices are not affected by city or industrial influence, that high land and high cost of labor go together while in other sections cheap land and cheap labor are found. If the immigrants now coming are not inferior—and I do not believe that this can be disproved—they will become as competent producers as any others, and their standard of life must rise. The Italian immigrants who in recent years have accumulated \$90,000,000 of property in New York City alone compare very favorably with any group. I think that immigration is a problem, a problem that affects many of our social institutions. It calls for careful study, and, as a student, I am still skeptical of many popular verdicts.

B. H. HIBBARD: No doubt Professor Carver is right so far as the general case is concerned, that is, taking a comprehensive view of the whole immigration question, embracing every sort of immigrant and over a long period of years. But are we not sometimes justified in taking a limited view? It might happen that the introduction of great numbers of southern European laborers into our agricultural districts would all but inevitably result in either an agricultural proletariat or in the undue subdivision of land, but it does not follow that the introduction of a considerable number of immigrants such as might come from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, or Great Britain would necessarily tend in either of these two directions. At present there are few coming from these countries; the feeling is widespread that the time to come to America to make a start in farming is past. Certain governments, notably the German, spare no pains to keep their people from leaving the homeland. "There is room and work in Germany for all," is a sentiment taught in the public schools of Germany. As a matter of fact a German laborer can easily double his net income, and increase his chances of becoming an independent farmer many fold by emigrating to this country. In England the tendency is toward other parts of the Empire rather than toward this country.

Looking about us at home we see any number of farmers perplexed and hampered by the lack of farm laborers and the unreliability of what is available, and this on a farm adapted to the needs of one family, but which for some reason cannot be operated by the family alone. A vast number of the young men reared on American farms have a taste for some other calling, and a stream of them is going to the cities. Many who remain on the farms do so with so little heart that they need the example and competition of the painstaking foreigner to bring them to high efficiency.

The introduction of the "blanket men" as found in the West; the Orientals, who thin beets, or any other class who take a distinctively subordinate place, can result only in one or the other of the undesirable outcomes suggested above, since these men lack the instincts or the ability to acquire a farm; but the German or the Norwegian makes, in the first place, an admirable self-respecting hired man, and, in the second place, is almost certain to become the owner of a farm for himself before middle life. Is it not probable that in doing so he, instead of crowding a land-owning farmer off the land, takes the place of a tenant

who is renting from the man discouraged over hired help, or from the banker or business man to whom the farm on this account has been sold?

What American agriculture needs is a class of men who like to work the soil, and, since there appears to be not enough of that sort of men here yet, it would seem desirable from every point of view to encourage the class of immigrants out of whom efficient farm laborers can be made at once, and independent farm owners eventually. It is more important that the farms of America be owned and operated by the same men than that we develop a class having so-called American ancestry.

R. B. BRINSMADE: The noted English author, Mr. H. G. Wells, when he came to this country in 1905, was surprised at our industrial activity and at our ability to absorb a vast foreign immigration without a marked reduction in our wage rate. If his visit had been delayed until this year, I think that his impression would have been different, for our recent great rise of prices is acknowledged to be equivalent to a marked reduction in general wages. Wages have kept pace with prices only in certain select occupations where strong trade-unions, or other forces on the side of labor, have compelled employers to share the increase in the receipts for their output.

First, I want to disagree sharply with the last speaker, who stated that high wages accompany high land values and low wages accompany low land values. Not only does his statement differ from the ideas of Ricardo and Henry George on the subject, but my own observations in various parts of the world have convinced me that the last two authors are right in this matter. New York City has the highest land value in this country and also one of the lowest wage rates for common labor, considering its cost of living; while in the Rocky Mountain states, with cheap land, we have the highest wage rate. It is true that we find low priced farm lands in New York State, but this is due to sterility or unfavorable soil for raising profitably marketable products and has no connection with the wage rate. Such land is near the margin of cultivation, and, having little surplus product over the prevailing wages for working, it has naturally little or no capitalized rent or land value.

It seems to me that we should consider immigration problems more with reference to our laws governing the distribution of

wealth than have the previous speakers. If our present laws give a small exploiting class of monopolists an unfair advantage in the wage contract, by which they can keep laborers from utilizing our natural resources except with its permission, it is evident that the larger the helpless laboring class the easier it will be for them to have it at their mercy; but would not that be equally true if the number of laborers arose from our natural increase instead of immigration?

We cannot then separate the economic phase of immigration from its political problem. The more ignorant voters we have amongst us the easier it is for our shrewd monopolist class to make laws in its own interest. This is evidenced in New Mexico, where two thirds of the voters are Spanish Mexicans too ignorant to have any idea of the effect of government on their economic status as wage earners. In consequence of this, the recent Constitutional Convention produced a document which, according to Mr. Ferguson, the leader of the Democratic delegation, was planned with the object of enslaving the state for the next twenty-five years to the railroads and their allied monopolistic interests.

Considering then the admission of healthy, able-bodied immigrants alone, as our present law provides, I can see no reason why their entrance should be necessarily a menace to our standard of living, but a vote should not be given them until they are sufficiently informed of their own political interests to use it with discretion. Exclusion on racial lines is another problem, more social than economic.

Our natural resources would easily support in affluence the population of China and more, hence do not let us blame our immigration for the exploitation of our laboring class, which is due to wealth distributive laws in the interest of forestallers and monopolists rather than of workers and producers.

T. N. CARVER: I have just heard at a meeting of the American Statistical Association the report that the census of 1910 shows that the large farms, as well as the small farms, are tending to disappear, but the middle sized farms are increasing. Now a middle sized farm, according to American standards, is a one-family farm—that is, a farm run on the average by the labor of one family, though there is an occasional hired man. One reason why the large farms disappear is because of the difficulty of

finding farm labor. The man who is farming on a scale so large that he must depend mainly upon hired labor is really at a disadvantage as compared with the man whose farm can be handled with his own labor. Of course this labor should be equipped, and is as a matter of fact equipped, with better teams, tools, and machinery. Now this concentration of our agriculture in the middle group of farms—that is, the one-family farms—I hold to be a desirable thing.

If scarcity of farm labor is what puts the bonanza farm at a disadvantage as compared with the middle sized farm, an abundance of farm labor would obviously have the opposite effect and tend to give the bonanza farmer a better chance than he now has. That, I should contend, would be a bad thing for American agriculture. Doubtless, as Professor Hibbard says, there is room for a few more immigrants of the right sort, to supply the occasional farm hand needed on the one-family farm, but there is nothing in any restrictive measure now proposed which would tend in any way to shut out that type of immigrant. The Scandinavian or the German immigrant who came a generation ago and began as a farm hand and gradually worked up to be a farm owner has quit coming, or practically so. I think it is because he feels the pressure of immigrants of a lower standard of living. That is to say, a Norwegian, an Englishman, a Scotchman, a Swede, or a German is probably about as well off today in his own country as he is in America. In his own country he has to meet the competition of his own countrymen, but when he comes to America he has to meet the competition of the Italians, the Hungarians, and the Poles. A reasonable restriction upon immigration—the application, say, of an educational test—would probably encourage these immigrants from Northern Europe by shutting out some of those from Southern Europe.

Now it is easy to say that there is an abundance of farm land in this country yet. You can undoubtedly find statistics showing that there are thousands of acres in California, Texas, New Mexico, and various other places, which are still unpeopled; but anyone who has traveled over those regions will be prepared to believe that there is as much overcrowding in New Mexico as there is on the East Side in New York—overcrowding in a real economic sense. One person to the square mile is overcrowding if it takes two square miles to make a living. It is a well known fact that the “congested districts” in Ireland are the most sparsely

populated parts of the island. The facts which are really significant as to overcrowding are the figures relating to the unemployed. If there are more people than can get jobs there is overcrowding, no matter how much free land there is that can be had for the asking.